

Message Text

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44

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TAGS: PINT, MA

SUBJ: FINAL PRE-REFERENDUM ROUNDUP

REF: TANANARIVE 2046

1. AS THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN SWINGS TO A CLOSE PRIOR TO DEC. 21 VOTE, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT IN ANYONE'S MIND HERE THAT RESULT WILL BE AN OVERWHELMING "YES". THE PUBLIC, EVEN IN THE AREA OF TANANARIVE WHERE THERE IS PROBABLY SUBSTANTIAL OPPOSITION, HAS REACTED WITH A MEASURE OF ENTHUSIASM TO RATSIRAKA'S CHARISMA AND DYNAMISM EVIDENCED DURING THE CAMPAIGN AS HE EMERGED FROM HIS PROTECTIVE SHELL. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GUAGE THE RE-ACTION IN THE PROVINCES BUT PROVINCIAL VISITS BY RATSIRAKA AND OTHER GOMR LEADERS WERE REPORTEDLY WELL RECEIVED.

2. OPPOSITION HAS BEEN ALMOST COMPLETELY MUTED. WE KNOW THAT OPPOSITION EXISTS IN A FEW POCKETS AROUND THE COUNTRY, BUT IT HAS NOT BEEN ORGANIZED EFFECTIVELY AND SUFFERS FROM LACK OF ACCESS TO THE MEDIA. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, ANDRE RESAMPA OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MANAGED TO OBTAIN MINIMAL AMOUNT OF PRESS ATTENTION DURING FIRST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE. NEWSPAPERS DEC.

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18 REPORTED PRO-CON DEBATE HELD IN FIANARANTSOA AND PUBLISHED

PART OF VERBATIM TEXT OF DEBATE. NONETHELESS, GOVERNMENT'S DIRECT AND INDIRECT SUPPORT FOR "YES" VOTE HAS DOMINATED CAMPAIGN. TO TOP IT OFF, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WERE INFORMED DEC. 19 OF INCREASES (AMOUNT UNSPECIFIED BUT EXPECTED TO BE AMPLE) IN SALARIES OF LOWER ECHELON OF CIVIL SERVICE.

3. RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY CAMPAIGN SPEAKERS TO MALAGASY RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. SOME HAVE REFUTED ALLEGATIONS THAT THERE ARE COMMUNISTS OR COMMUNIST-SYMPATHIZERS IN THE GOVT., STRESSING THAT SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM ARE NOT IDENTICAL BUT NOT EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCES AS THEY PERTAIN TO MADAGASCAR. FOR HIS PART, RATSIKAKA ON DEC. 17 STATED: "OTHERS MAINTAIN THAT IF RATSIKAKA COMES TO POWER NO FOREIGN COUNTRY WILL ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATION WITH US, NO INVESTOR WILL COME TO MADAGASCAR. THIS IS NOT TRUE, SINCE WITHIN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS 21 FOREIGN DELEGATIONS HAVE COME TO MADAGASCAR." HE NEGLECTED TO MENTION THAT THERE WERE NO "INVESTORS" AMONG THE DELEGATIONS, ONLY DONORS OF AID.

4. ELECTORAL PROCEDURES, BOTH REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AND PLANS FOR ACTUAL BALLOTTING, APPEAR TO BE PROPER AND NOT OPEN TO SUSPICION, THERE HAVE BEEN NO CALLS FOR OUTSIDE OBSERVERS, AND, AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, GOMR HAS NOT INVITED ANY.

5. SENIOR MEMBER OF SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, JOEL RAKOTOMALALA, HAS BEEN EXTREMELY VISIBLE THROUGHOUT CAMPAIGN. ACCORDING TO RUMORS, HE MAY BE RATSIKAKA'S CHOICE FOR PRIME MINISTER.

6. THERE HAS BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMENT AS TO WHEN THE SECOND MALAGASY REPUBLIC WILL BE INVESTED, ALTHOUGH SOME RUMORS SUGGEST THAT IT WILL TAKE PLACE PRIOR TO OR ON JAN. 1, 1976. AFTER OCT. 1972 REFERENDUM, GOVERNMENT OOK ONE MONTH TO TALLY THE VOTES OFFICIALLY BEFORE PROMULGATING CONSTITUTIONAL LAW WHICH PERMITTED RAMANTSOA TO ACT LEGALLY.

7. COMMENT: OVERALL, THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN WELL STAGED. IT HAS NOT, AS RESULT, PROVIDED US OR THE MALAGASY WITH A SPECIFIC PROGRAM (OR EVEN A FEELING) ON HOW THE FIRST GOVT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC WILL IMPLEMENT THE NEW CONSTITUTION OR RATSIKAKA'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHARTER, THE "LITTLE RED BOOK". (TRANSLATION OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION BEING SENT BY AIRGRAM.) THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN A PROVING GROUND FOR TESTING THE RHETORIC OF RATSIKAKA AND HIS COLLEAGUES, AND THEY HAVE COME OFF WELL. BUT THEY HAVE SIMPLY AVOIDED THE MORE COMPLEX ISSUES: RESTORATION OF ECONOMIC STABILITY AND THE SPECIFICS OF "MALAGASIZING" THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY. THE QUESTION IN OUR MINDS IS WHETHER (A) THE NEW GOMR WILL ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THE SOCIALISM IT PREACHES,

THEREBY CONTINUING THE TREND THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED HERE AND MOVING MORE TOWARD THE LEFT, OR (B) THE NEW GOMR WILL, REALIZING THAT CONTINUATION OF SUCH A TREND MIGHT FURTHER DISLOCATE AND WEAKEN THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE POPULACE, MOVE BACK TOWARD THE CENTER. ON THIS HINGES THE FUTURE OF US-MALAGASY RELATIONS. NO ONE HERE, MALAGASY OR FOREIGNER, KNOWS THE ANSWER.
SHEINBAUM

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